

Romans 11:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

Analysis

Paul erupts in doxology: **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!** (ο bathos ploutou kai sophias kai gnōseōs theou, ὡς βάθους πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ). The word bathos (βάθος, "depth") conveys unfathomable profundity. God's riches (ploutos, πλοῦτος), wisdom (sophia, σοφία), and knowledge (gnōsis, γνῶσις) are beyond human comprehension. Paul responds to his own argument: God's plan to save Jew and Gentile through mutual mercy is breathtakingly wise.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (ἵνας anexeraunēta ta krimata autou kai anexichniastoi hai hodoi autou, ὡς ἀνεξεραύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ). The word anexeraunēta (ἀνεξεραύνητα, "unsearchable") means beyond investigation; anexichniastoi (ἀνεξιχνίαστοι, "untraceable") means His paths leave no footprints to follow. God's judgments (decisions, decrees) and ways (methods, paths) transcend human reason. This is worship born from theological reflection.

Historical Context

After three chapters of dense argumentation (Romans 9-11), Paul pauses in awe. He hasn't exhausted the mystery—he's contemplated it and bows in worship. This doxology models the proper response to God's sovereignty: humble adoration, not proud systematizing.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul break into worship after explaining God's plan for Israel and the nations?
2. How does acknowledging the 'unsearchable' nature of God's judgments guard against presumption in theology?
3. What specific aspects of God's plan in Romans 9-11 evoke the greatest wonder in you?

Interlinear Text

Ω βάθος πλούτου καὶ σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως θεοῦ.
O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and knowledge of God
G5599 G899 G4149 G2532 G4678 G2532 G1108 G2316

ώς ἀνεξερεύνητα τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀνεξιχνίαστοι
! how unsearchable judgments are his and past finding out
G5613 G419 G3588 G2917 G846 G2532 G421

αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ
G3588 ways are his
G3598 G846

Additional Cross-References

Job 5:9 (Parallel theme): Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

Psalms 92:5 (Parallel theme): O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

Romans 2:4 (References God): Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Job 37:23 (Judgment): Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

Ephesians 3:10 (References God): To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Psalms 36:6 (Judgment): Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

Ephesians 1:7 (Parallel theme): In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (References God): He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

Colossians 1:27 (References God): To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

Psalms 97:2 (Judgment): Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.